

LESSON THIRTEEN

Core Learning Goal: 3

The student will demonstrate an understanding of geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities through history.

Expectation: 1

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of cultural and physical geographic factors in the development of government policy.

Indicator 3.1.1

The student will explain the influence of demographic changes on government policies.

Assessment Limits:

- ? ***Influence of demographic factors on voting patterns.***
- ? *Influence of demographic factors on government funding decisions.*

Overview:

This lesson requires students to interpret graphs and analyze trends in voter participation. The data show students demographic factors that contribute to voter turnout.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will interpret graphs and other demographic data.
Students will analyze voter participation patterns and identify the characteristics of people most likely to vote.

Materials:

Student Handout: ***Demographic Investigation Directions***

Data Handout 1: *Voter Participation* (5 graphs)

Data Handout 2: *Voting Age Population* (5 graphs)

Data Handout 3: *Voter Registration and Turnout by State*

Data Handout 4: *Voter Registration Process*

Data Handout 5: *Percent of Popular Vote (1996)*

Percent of Voting Age Population

This Net Investigation activity can be found at:

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/isa/ninvest/vote/voteindex.htm>

Procedures:

1. Ask students if they can explain why some people do not vote.
2. Distribute the handout **Demographic Investigation Directions**. After students have completed the first item, have them examine the five graphs on Data Handout 1. Guide students in analyzing each graph. Then have students complete the investigation in pairs. Make sure that each pair receives a copy of all other **Data Handouts**.
3. If students use the web-based version, they are asked to link to Project Vote Smart's information on state voter registration for the four states they have to examine. There is an archived version of this registration information on Data Handout 4.
4. Tell students to stop when they have completed Step 8, and conduct a debriefing. Students should then complete the summary activities (steps 9 and 10) individually or with their partners. Have student volunteers share their public service announcements.

Assessment of Indicator:

Have students answer this Brief Constructed Response item:

“Democracy is not a spectator sport.”

League of Women Voters Ad

- ? Describe reasons for low voter turnout in United States elections.
- ? What is the most effective way to increase voter participation?
- ? Include examples and details to support your answer.

Use the Social Studies Rubric to score student responses.

Demographic Investigation Directions

1. Examine the demographic factors below. In each column, circle the demographic factor that would make an individual most likely to vote.

GENDER	RACE	AGE	INCOME	EDUCATION
Male	White	Young	Upper Class	Grade school
Female	Black	Middle aged	Middle Class	High school
	Hispanic	Elderly	Lower Class	Some college
	Asian			College grad

2. Analyze the five *Voter Participation* graphs on **Data Handout 1**. Write one or two sentences explaining how the data in the graphs do or do not support your choices above.
3. Analyze the five *Voting Age Population of States* graphs on **Data Handout 2**. Based on this information, predict which state has the highest voter turnout. Defend your choice by explaining the influence of demographic factors on voter turnout, and by citing data from the graphs.

Use the same graph information to predict which state has the lowest voter turnout. Defend your choice by explaining the influence of demographic factors on voter turnout, and by citing data from the graphs.

4. Check your answers to the previous question by examining the *Voter Registration and Turnout by State* graph on **Data Handout 3**. Then answer:
Which state had the highest voter turnout?
Which state had the lowest voter turnout?
What conclusions can be drawn about voter turnout?
5. Formulate a hypothesis about what factors other than demographics may contribute to high or low turnout in a particular state.

6. Check your hypothesis by examining the *Voter Registration Process* for each state on **Data Handout 4**. Compare the information presented there with the graph that you examined in question #4. According to the information about voter registration in each state, what factors other than demographics may influence voter turnout in a particular state?

7. Examine *Percent of Popular Vote Earned by Each Candidate* (top graph) on **Data Handout 5**. From this data, what conclusions can you draw about the election?

8. Now examine *Percent of Voting Age Population that Voted for Each Candidate* (bottom graph) on **Data Handout 5**. Then answer:
How does this graph differ from the one before it?

What does the largest segment of the graph represent?

Who won the election, and with what percentage of the vote?

From this data, what conclusions can you draw about the election?

9. Select one specific demographic group known for its low voter participation and devise a plan to improve voter turnout among members of that group. Consider the following:
What may have prevented these people from voting in the first place?

What issues might interest these citizens?

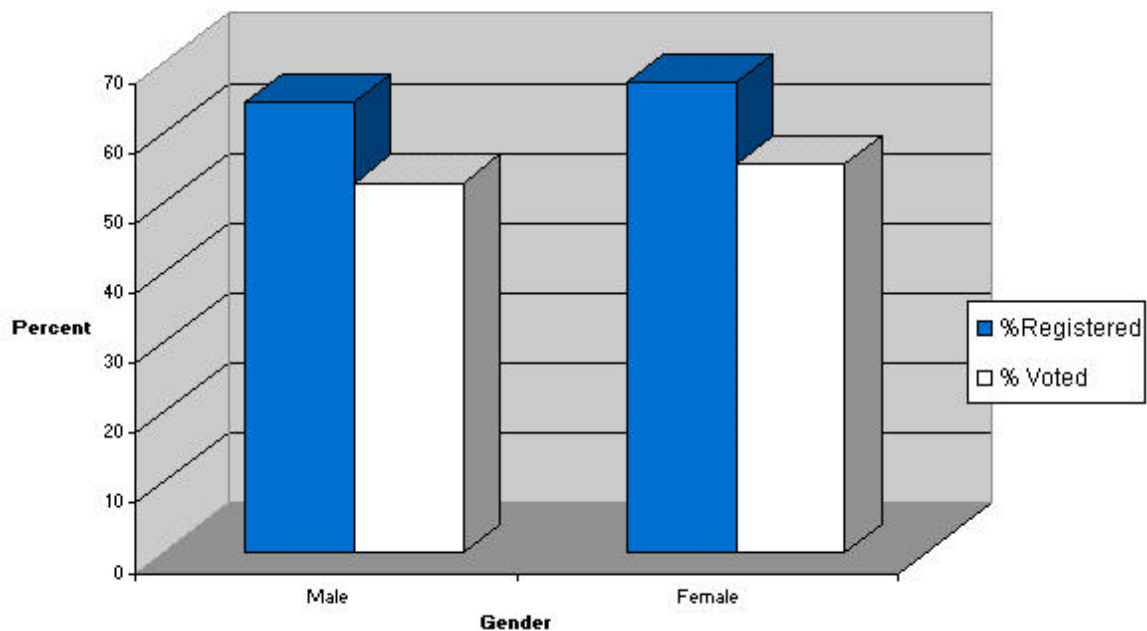
What advertising techniques might encourage these citizens to vote?

How can you convince these citizens that their vote matters?

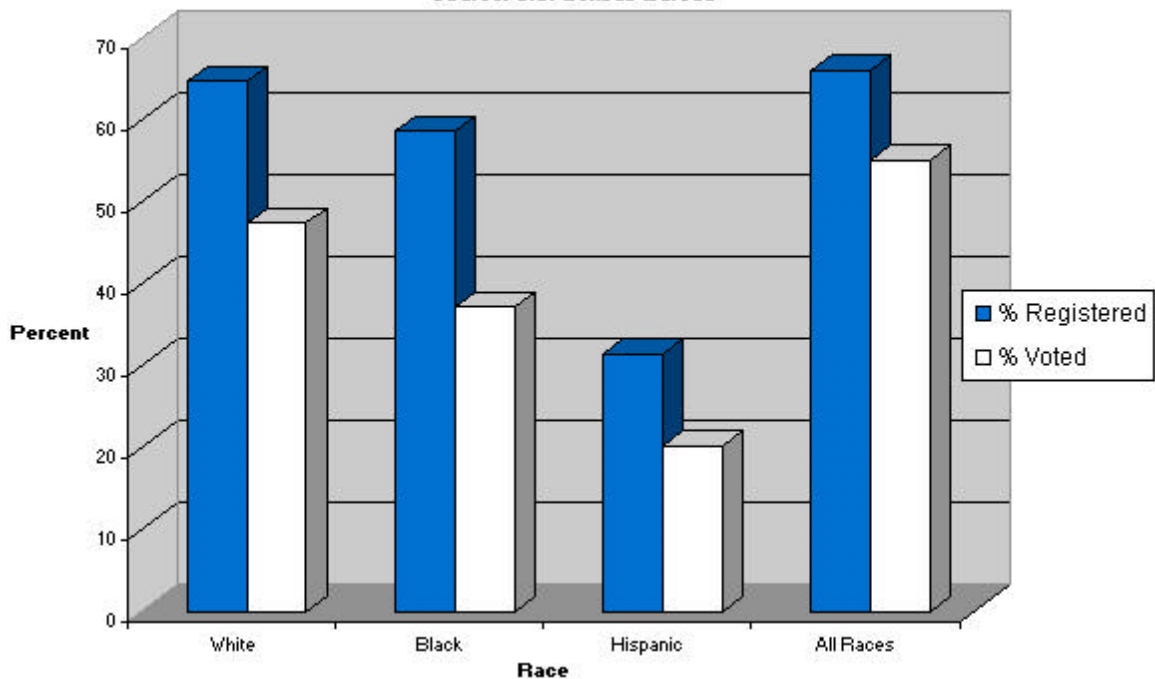
10. Write the dialogue for a 15-second public service announcement which encourages citizens to vote. Your ad should target the specific demographic group you selected in the previous question.

Data Handout 1a

Voter Participation by Gender
1996 Presidential Election
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

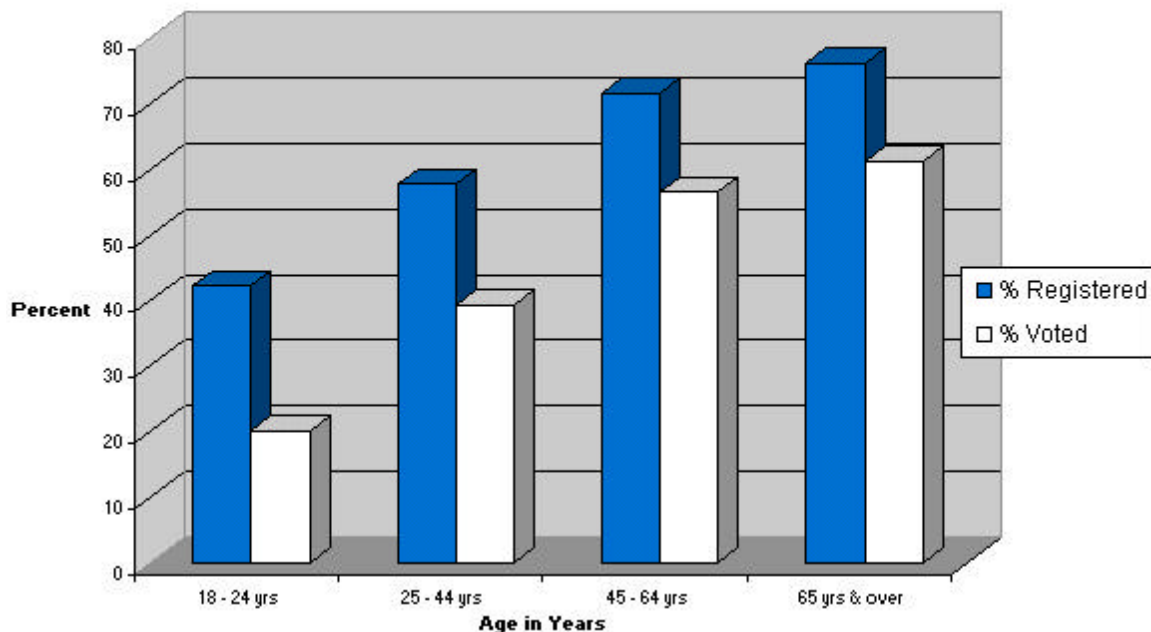


Voter Participation by Race
1996 Presidential Election
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

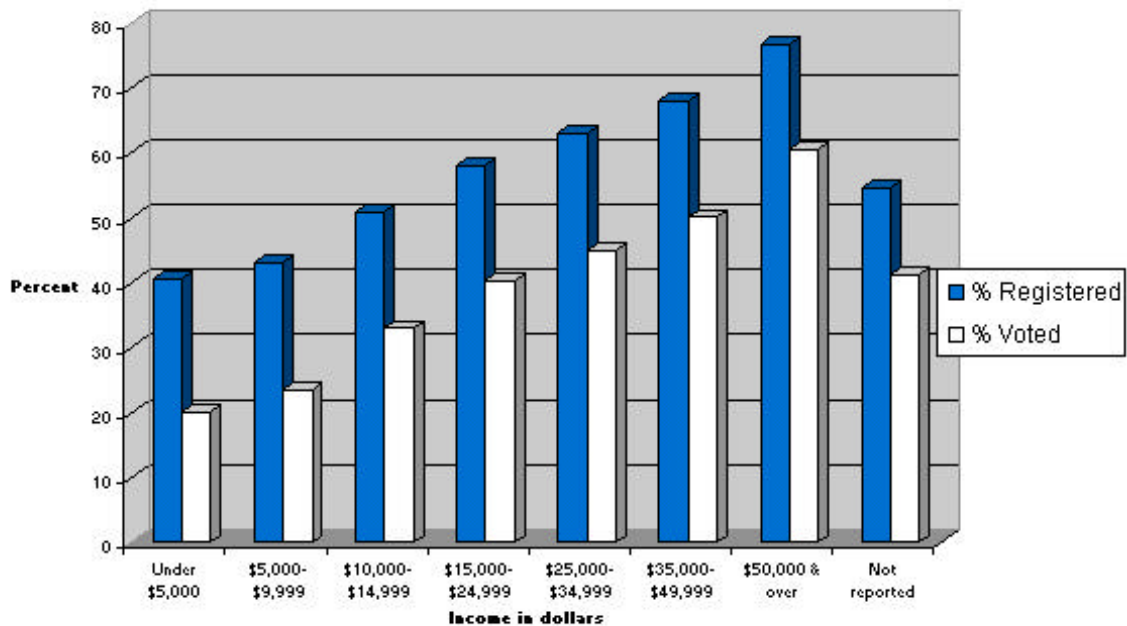


Data Handout 1b

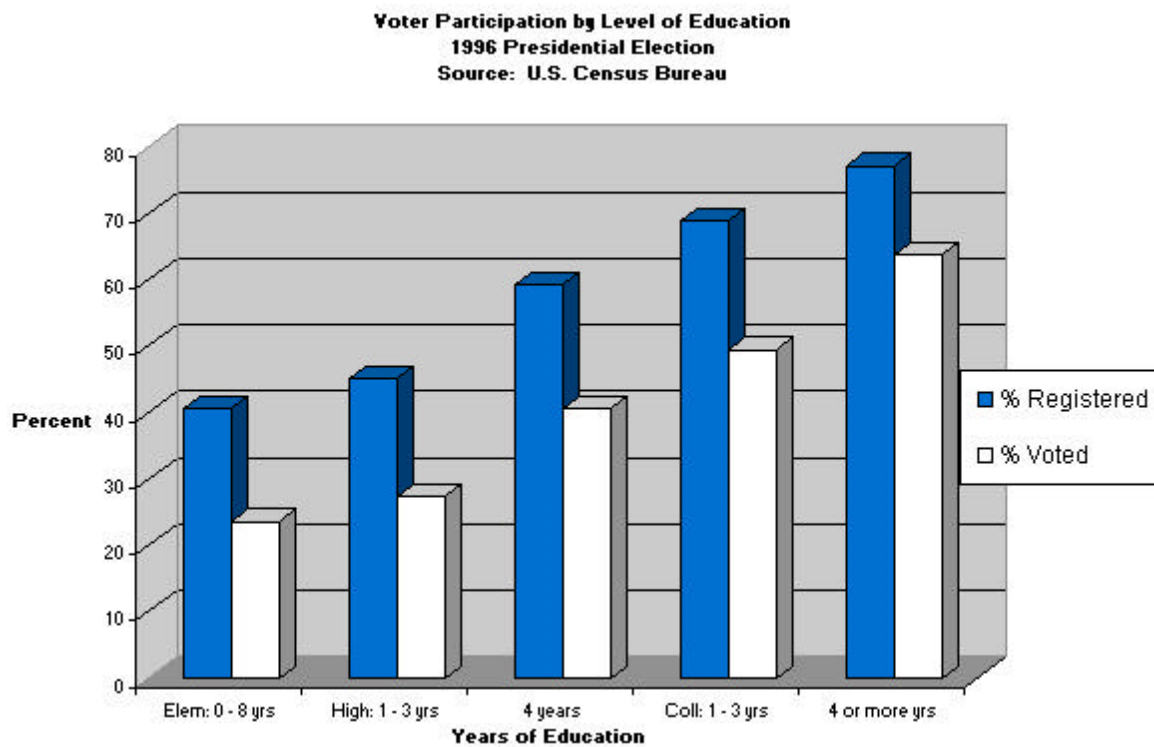
Voter Participation by Age
1996 Presidential Election
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Voter Participation by Income
1996 Presidential Election
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

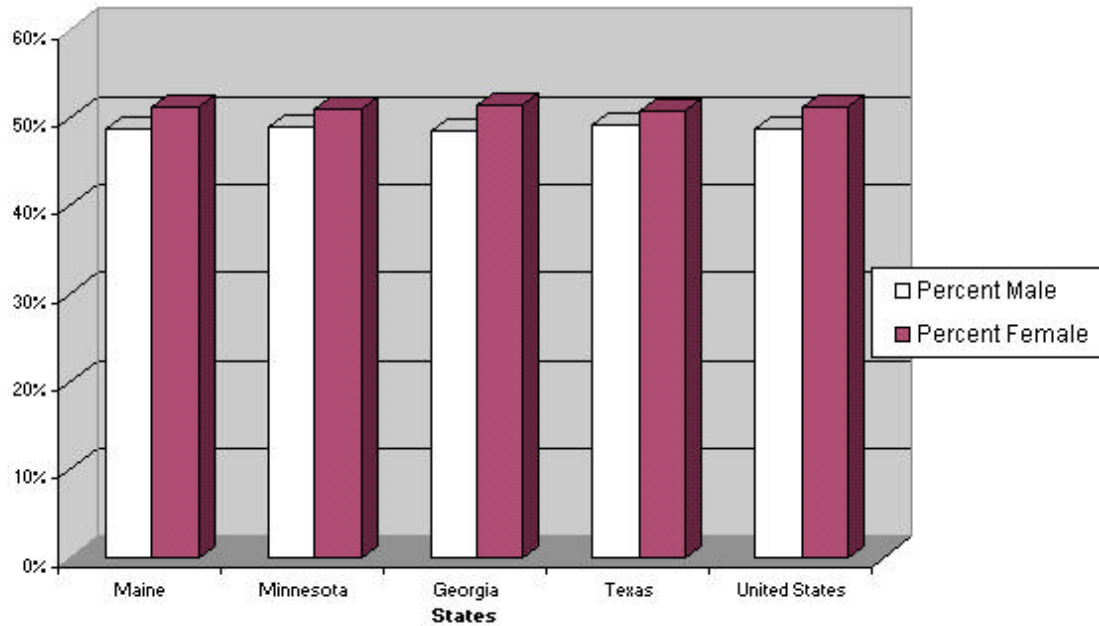


Data Handout 1c

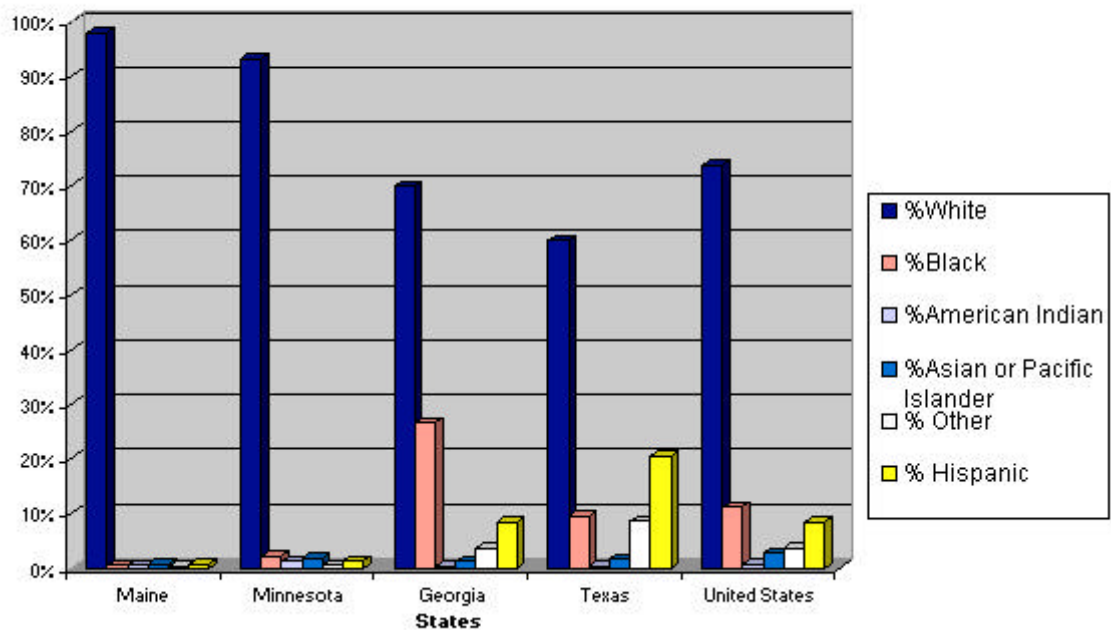


Data Handout 2a

Voting Age Population of States by Gender
1996 Presidential Election
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

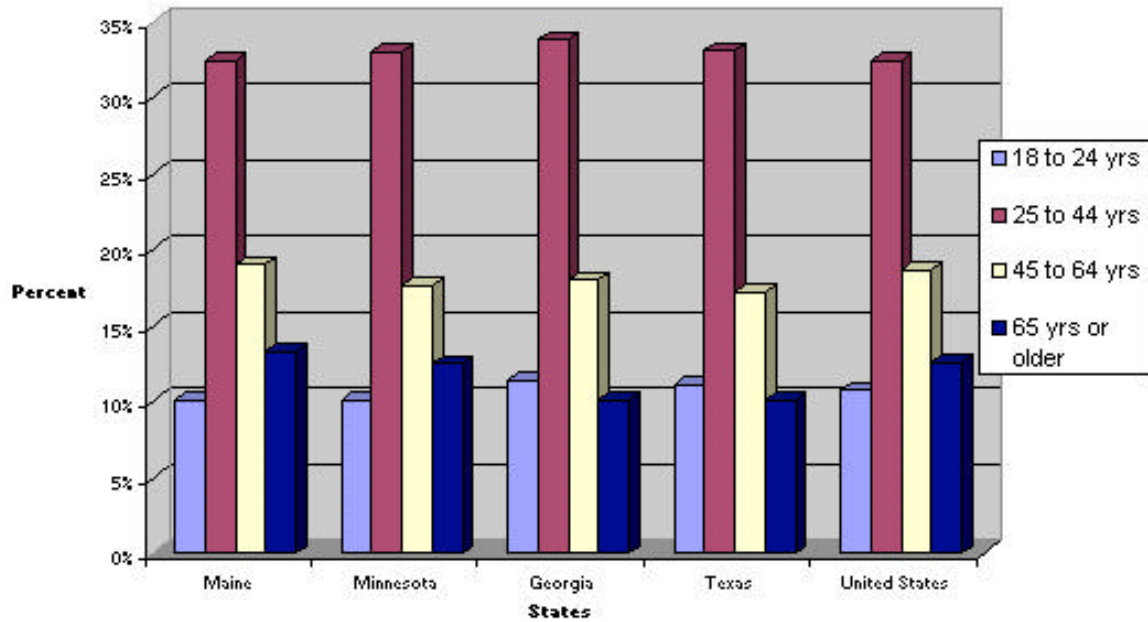


Voting Age Population of States by Race
1996 Presidential Election
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

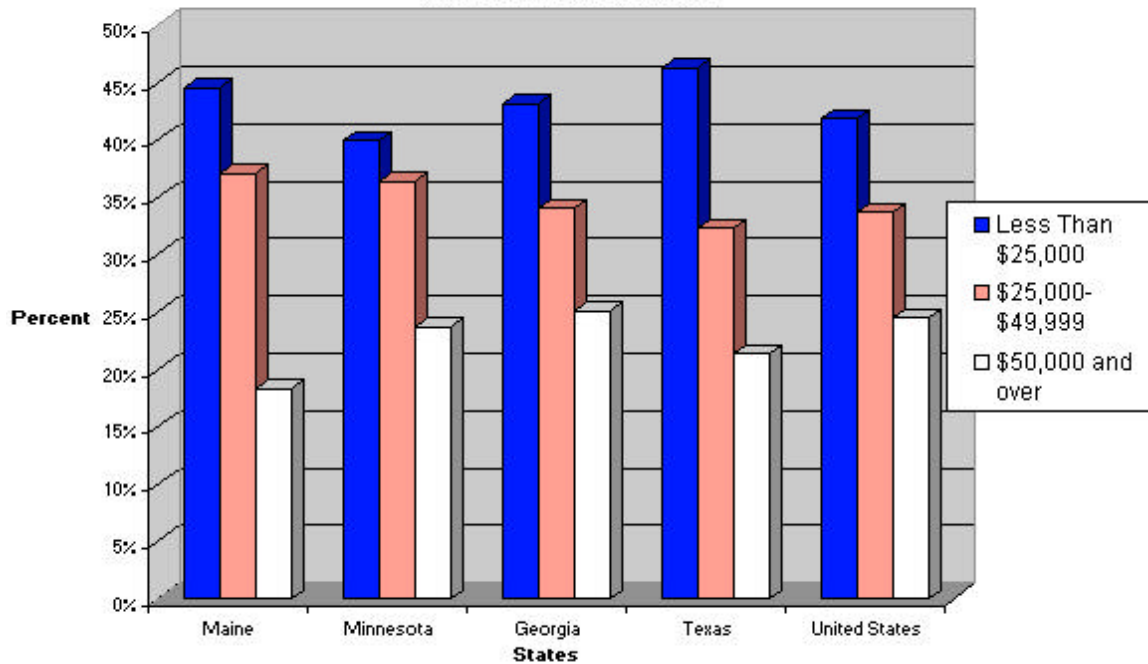


Data Handout 2b

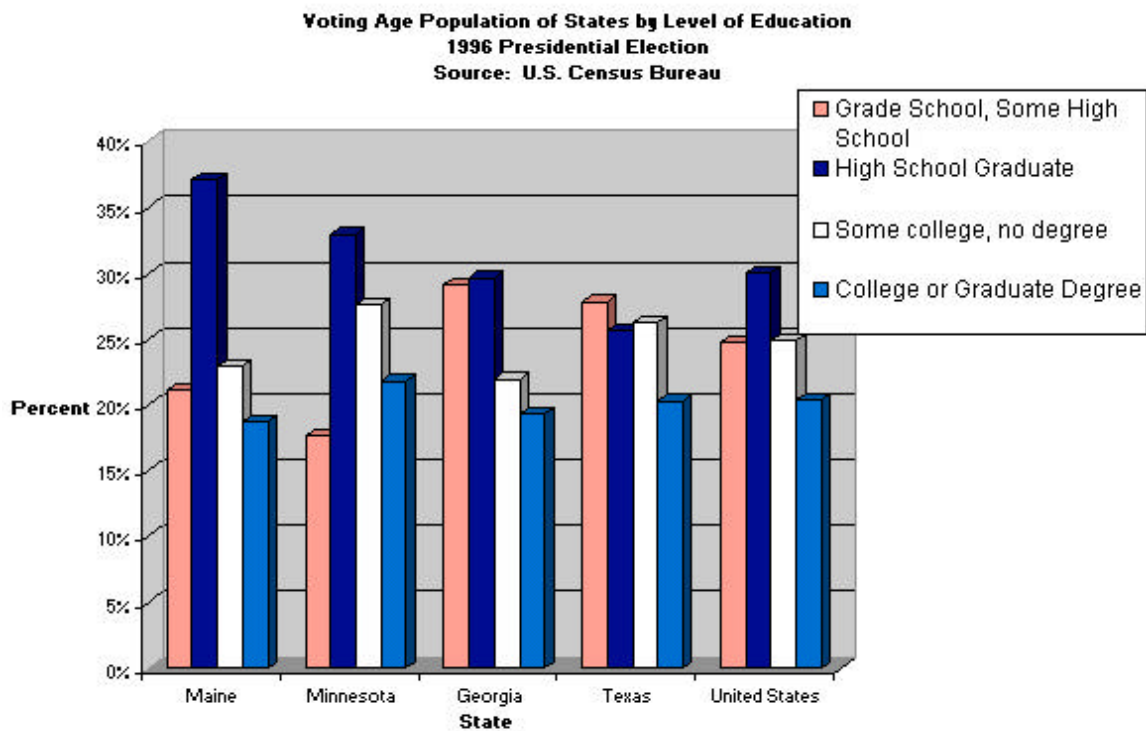
Voting Age Population of States by Age
1996 Presidential Election
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



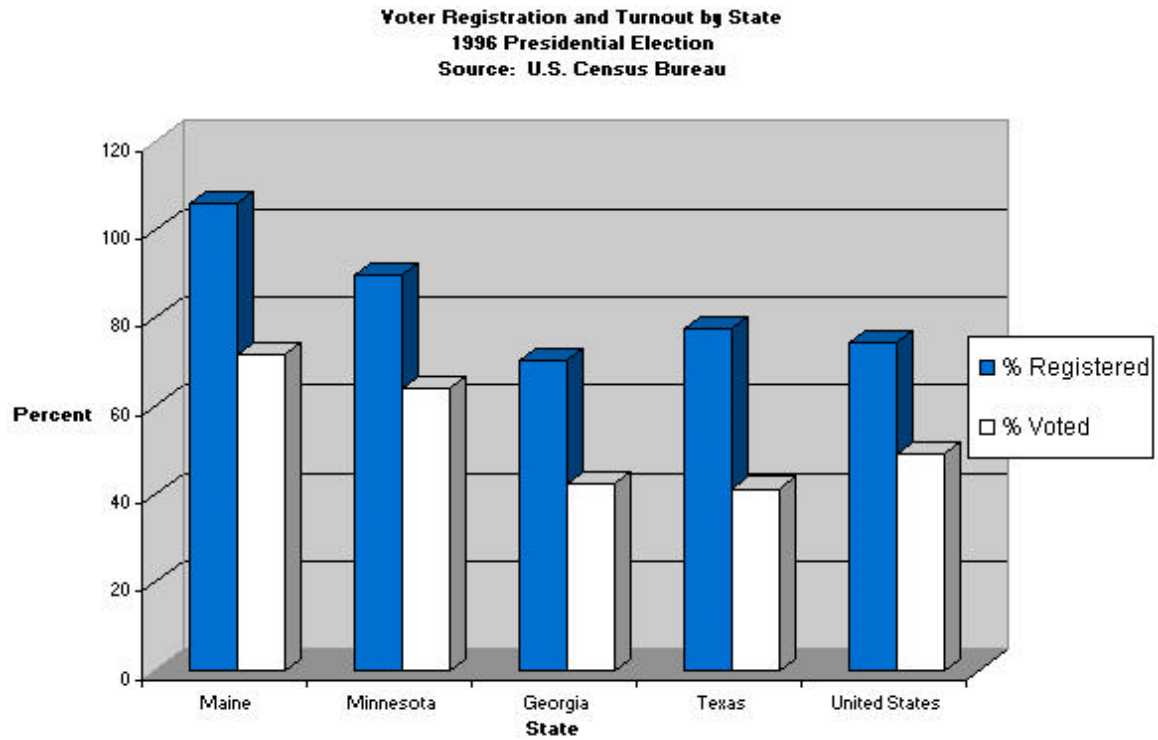
Voting Age Population by Income
1996 Presidential Election
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Data Handout 2c



Data Handout 3



Voter Registration & Election Dates

Maine

- ? Must register to vote on election day or 15 days before the election, can register on election day at the polls.
- ? Can change party affiliation 15 days before the election or select party affiliation at the polls.
- ? Election dates:
 - Presidential primary 03/07/00
 - Congressional and state primary 06/13/00
 - General election 11/07/00
- ? Filing deadline for candidates to appear on federal or state ballot:
 - Major party 2000 (5pm)
 - 3rd party n/a
 - Independent 2000 (5pm)
- ? Can register to vote in person or obtain a mail-in application from:
 - Town election office (see county election office list)
 - Division of motor vehicles
 - Aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) offices
 - Medicaid offices
 - Food stamps offices
 - Women, infants and children (WIC) benefits offices
 - Agencies that provide services to people with disabilities
- ? Obtain an online voter registration application at:
<http://www.fec.gov/votregis/vr.htm>

Website Source:

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/isa/ninvest/vote/voteregister.htm#Maine>

Minnesota

- ? Must register to vote 20 days before the election or on election day at the polls.
- ? Can select party affiliation at the polls.
- ? Election dates:
 - Presidential primary 04/04/00
 - Congressional and state primary 09/12/00
 - General election 11/07/00
- ? Filing deadline for candidates to appear on federal or state ballot:
 - Major party 2000
 - 3rd party 2000
 - Independent 2000

Data Handout 4b

- ? Can register in person or obtain a mail-in application from:
 - County election office (see county election office list)
 - Division of motor vehicles
 - State, county or city offices
 - Public libraries
 - College registrar's office or student association
 - State income tax booklet
- ? Obtain an online voter registration application at:
<http://www.fec.gov/votregis/vr.htm>

Website source:

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/isa/ninvest/vote/voteregister.htm#Minnesota>

Georgia

- ? Must register to vote 30 days before the election.
- ? Can select party affiliation at the polls.
- ? Election dates:
 - Presidential primary 03/14/00
 - Congressional and state primary 07/18/00;
 - Runoff 08/2000
 - General election 11/07/00
- ? Filing deadline for candidates to appear on federal or state ballot:
 - Major party 2000
 - 3rd party 2000 (noon)
 - Independent 2000 (noon)
- ? Can register to vote in person or obtain a mail-in application from:
 - County election office (see county election office list)
 - Division of motor vehicles
 - Aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) offices
 - Medicaid offices
 - Food Stamps offices
 - Women, infants and children (WIC) benefits offices
 - Agencies that provide services to people with disabilities
 - Public libraries
 - Public schools
- ? Request a voter registration application at:
sosweb@SOS.State.GA.US

Website source:

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/isa/ninvest/vote/voteregister.htm#Georgia>

Texas

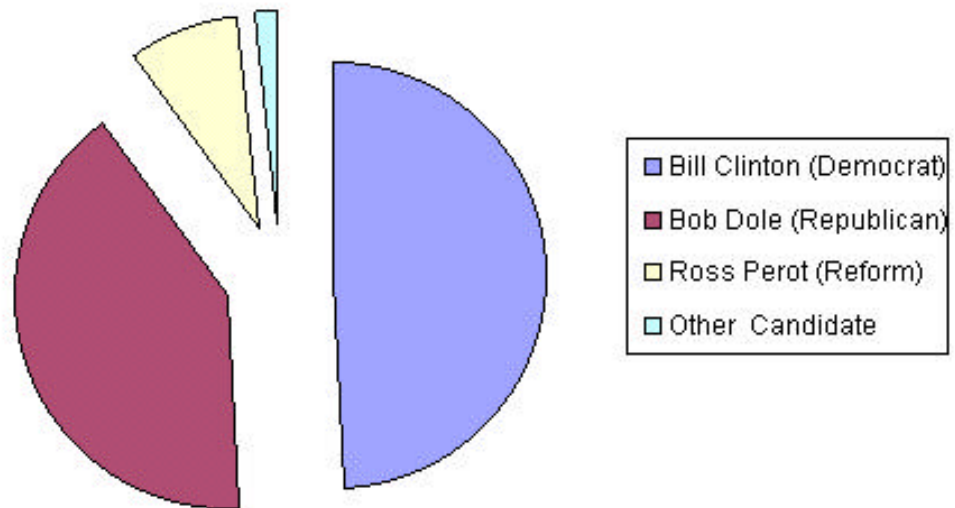
- ? Must register to vote 30 days before the election.
- ? Can select party affiliation at the polls.
- ? Election dates:
 - Presidential primary 03/14/00
 - Congressional and state primary 03/14/00;
 - Runoff 2000
 - General election 11/07/00
- ? Filing deadline for candidates to appear on federal or state ballot:
 - Major party 2000
 - 3rd party 2000
 - Independent 2000
- ? Can register to vote in person or obtain a mail-in application from:
 - County election office (see county election office list)
 - Division of motor vehicles offices
 - Aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) offices
 - Medicaid offices
 - Food stamps offices
 - Women, infants and children (WIC) benefits offices
 - Agencies that provide services to people with disabilities
 - Elections Division Hotline 800-252-VOTE (8683)
- ? Obtain an online voter registration application at:
<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/function/elec1/voter/reqvr.htm>

Website source:

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/isa/ninvest/vote/voteregister.htm#Texas>

Data Handout 5

**Percent of Popular Vote Earned by Each Candidate
1996 Presidential Election
Source: Federal Election Commission**



**Percent of Voting Age Population that Voted for Each Candidate
1996 Presidential Election
Source: Federal Election Commission**

